

**Testimony of Christopher Bessette**  
**UConn School of Medicine- Class of 2023**  
**Appropriations Committee**  
**3/4/2021 Public Hearing**  
**RE: UConn Health Budget**

My name is Christopher Bessette, and I am a second-year medical student at UConn School of Medicine. I would like to thank you for your past and continued support of UConn Health, and for taking the time to allow us to testify today.

As a non-traditional student who acquired a Master of Public Health before attending medical school, UConn's commitment to providing affordable care to the most vulnerable populations in Connecticut was incredibly attractive to me when choosing which institution to attend. I believe the last year has highlighted the importance of institutions with this kind of focus in our country, as UConn Health's response to the COVID-19 global epidemic was integral in saving the lives of countless Connecticut residents, as well as those nation and worldwide. By not only providing life-saving care, but also by supporting research and medical technology innovations, strategies developed in Farmington changed the worldwide response to the pandemic.

I also feel personally fortunate to be a part of the UConn system. As a patient with type 1 diabetes, the COVID-19 pandemic brought about additional risks to my own health as well as to many struggling with my condition. UConn Health worked with me to ensure I could continue my education in the safest manner possible, while instituting numerous safety precautions throughout their organization to keep every patient safe while seeking medical care.

Finally, UConn's commitment to educating future CT physicians is essential to maintaining our future safety. Through the groundbreaking MDelta curriculum, UConn is ensuring that my classmates and I are prepared to be compassionate and empathetic doctors from the first day, most of whom (like me) plan to stay home in Connecticut and help keep our populations healthy and safe for decades to come. State funding for UConn Health is critical for allowing students like me to come home and begin to give back to my community as a clinician, as well as for ensuring the health of Connecticut's most vulnerable populations. I ask that you please do everything you can to ensure that the backbone of Connecticut health receives the funding it needs for years to come.

Again, thank you for taking the time to hear from us today, and thank you for your support.